

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Plans
Deputy Director for Science & Technology

SUBJECT: Voluntary Language Training Program

1. The Agency Voluntary Language Training Program (VLTP) has been in existence eight years to offer employees the opportunity to acquire or maintain proficiency in foreign languages. In the early days of the program, a system of monetary awards was established as an inducement to encourage participation. Classes are taught outside the normal working day by instructors selected from among Agency employees who are paid at the over-time rate of their grade for the hours they devote to teaching. Occasionally, instructors have been engaged on contract if the need for an instructor could not be filled from among Agency employees. Participation by the students is entirely voluntary and classes are formed only when a minimum of four candidates have expressed an interest in a particular language.

2. Participation in the VLTP during the first few years of the program was rather extensive, with a peak enrollment of 372 students during the 1959-60 fall-winter term. There was a rapid decline in employee interest after the monetary awards portion of the program was discontinued in August 1963. Registration for the current semester, which began in March, is the lowest since the program was begun eight years ago. It began with 133 students in 15 classes studying five languages: French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. Thirty-four and one-half per cent of the original enrollment dropped out before 13 weeks of the semester were concluded. The semester runs 20 weeks, so further drop-outs can still be expected. During the previous semester which ended in February of 1965, 47% of the original enrollment had dropped out before the end of the 20 weeks. None of the students currently enrolled in the voluntary language program are studying at above the introductory level. Last semester there were a handful who completed the second level of instruction which qualifies people to meet the level of "elementary speaking and understanding." There are no current enrollments in any advanced language training courses in the voluntary program. Many of the

SECRET

enrollees score at the lowest acceptable point on the Foreign Language Aptitude Test. There were 18 students with this lowest score in the present class. Nine of these have dropped out and three others are barely holding their heads above water. Many of the enrollees are in the clerical ranks. For example, 15 students in grades GS 3-5 enrolled last March and 11 of these dropped out before the end of 13 weeks.

3. Experience during the present semester is representative of the trend which has developed since the abolition of the monetary awards system and is such that it raises a serious question about whether or not the Voluntary Language Training Program is any longer a useful and productive part of our language training; and whether or not the results are worth the time, effort, and cost required to keep it going. Subject to your concurrence, we propose that the Voluntary Language Training Program be suspended for a period of one year beginning 1 September 1965. Although there are about 30 students who may have qualified for further language training, we believe that no one will be seriously inconvenienced by a suspension of the program. If anyone is seriously inconvenienced, we believe alternative arrangements can be made to accommodate them. During the period of the suspension, further studies will be made to determine how we can best meet Agency language requirements.

4. Your concurrence with the suspension of the program for one year is requested.

R. L. Bannerman
Deputy Director
for Support

cc: Director of Training

SECRET

DD/S 65. 3638
3 AUG 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Voluntary Language Training Program

1. This memorandum submits a recommendation for your approval; this recommendation is contained in paragraph 4.

2. The Language Development Program (LDP) was established in February of 1957 to encourage Agency employees to acquire and/or maintain certain proficiencies in foreign languages. It was believed that through a system of formal language programs the Agency could build up a language reservoir from which it could draw to meet its language requirements. As an integral part of this program and as an inducement to encourage full participation, a system of monetary awards was set up, along with a training program designed to assist employees in their language endeavors. This program was known as the Voluntary Language Training Program. (VLTP)

3. Participation in the VLTP during the first few years of the program was rather extensive, with a peak enrollment of 372 students in the 1959-60 fall-winter term. In August 1963, however, the monetary awards portion of the program was discontinued due to budgetary limitations and this resulted in a rapid decline in employee interest. This trend has continued and enrollments have now reached an all-time low. Only 133 students were enrolled in voluntary language training for the semester beginning in March 1965. Less than 100 of these are still in language training, and only 30 to 35 have made sufficient progress to permit their entrance in the next phase.

4. In view of this trend, we seriously question whether the VLTP is any longer a useful vehicle in the Language Development Program; and whether the results are worth the time, effort, and cost required to keep it going. It is recommended, therefore, that

SECRET



SECRET

the Voluntary Language Training Program be suspended for a period of one year beginning 1 September 1965. During this period further studies will be made as to how we can best meet Agency language requirements, but current information indicates that this can be done through our regular scheduled language courses.

5. The 30 plus students mentioned above who may qualify for further language training can be accommodated in one of our regular scheduled courses.

MATTHEW BAIRD
Director of Training

CONCUR:

Desmond FitzGerald
Deputy Director for Plans

Ray S. Cline
Deputy Director for Intelligence

Albert D. Wheelon
Deputy Director for Science &
Technology

The recommendation contained in
paragraph 4 is approved:

R. L. Bannerman
Deputy Director for Support

SECRET